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## ABSTRACT

The Regional Educational Laboratory Program is the U.S. Department of Education's largest research-and-development investment designed to help educators, policy makers, and communities improve schools. Administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), the network of 10 regional labs works to ensure that lessons about school reform developed or learned in one site can be appropriately applied elsewhere, and that everyone involved in educational improvement will have access to the best available research, knowledge from practice, and exemplary and promising programs. This handbook describes each laboratory's mission, key initiatives, ongoing work, and "signature programs"; provides examples of recent, high-quality materials selected from the many publications and products available from each lab; and previews each lab's website. Contact information for each lab is also provided. The labs include the Northeast and Islands Laboratory at Brown University (LAB), the Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS), the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE), the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL), WestEd, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), and the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL). (LMI)

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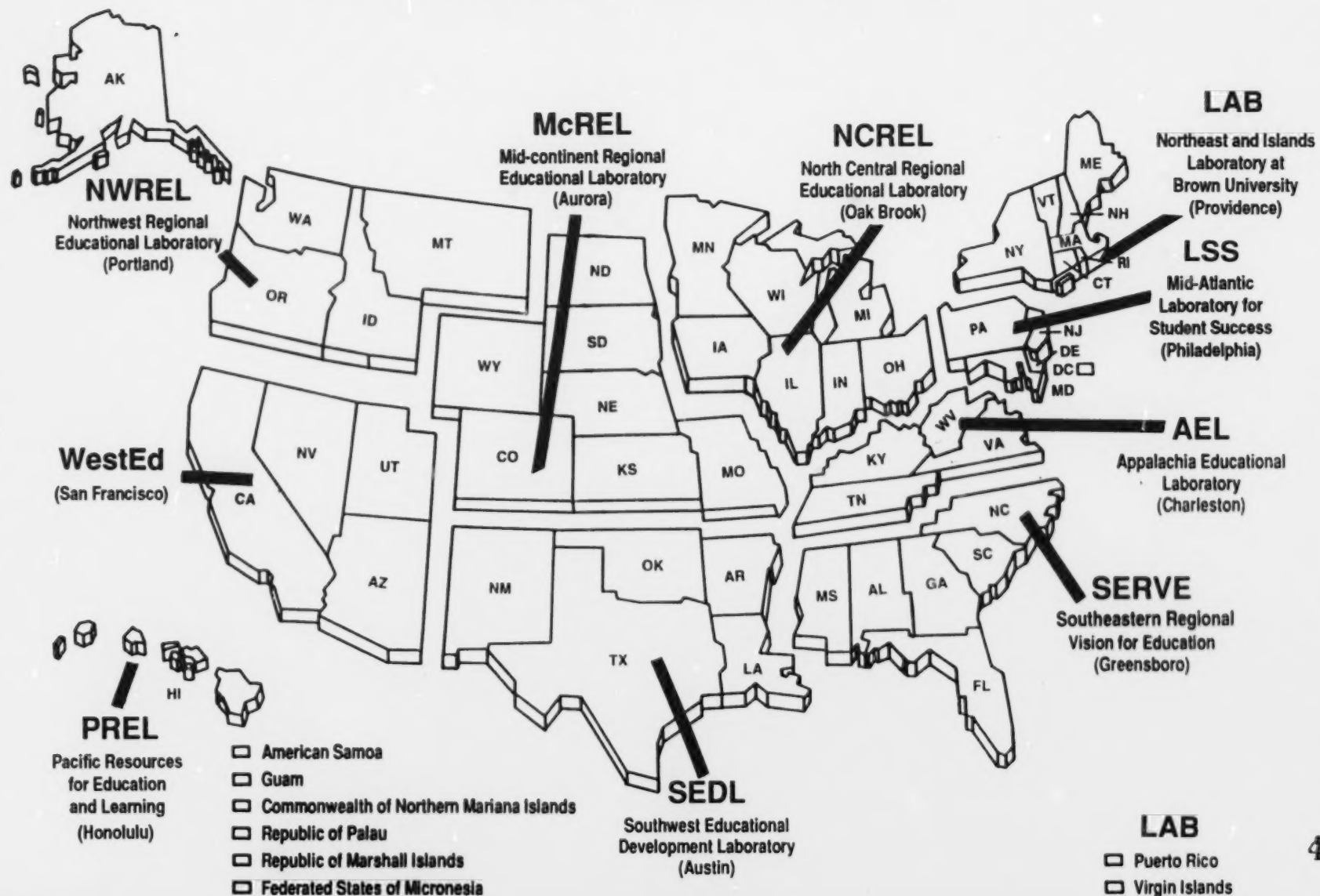
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# Regional Educational Laboratory Map



# **Profiles of the Regional Educational Laboratories**

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December 1997

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## Foreword

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If you are an educator facing the difficult challenges of school improvement, or if you are a teacher, parent, or community member interested in knowing what research says about successful educational reform, we hope you take every advantage of the services and the information available through your Regional Educational Laboratory. The Regional Educational Laboratory Program (the "Lab Program") is the U.S. Department of Education's largest research and development investment designed to help educators, policy makers, and communities improve schools and help all students attain their full potential. Administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), the network of 10 Regional Labs works to ensure that lessons about school reform developed or learned in one site can be appropriately applied elsewhere and that everyone involved in educational improvement will have access to the best available research, knowledge from practice, and exemplary and promising programs.

This handbook describes each Laboratory's mission; key initiatives and ongoing work; "signature programs" that each Lab has developed over a period of time that have made a difference in the field; a few examples of recent, high-quality materials selected from the many publications and products available from each Lab; and a preview of each Lab's Web site. We also have provided information on how to contact the Laboratory nearest you or the OERI program officer for that Laboratory.

### **Background on the Regional Educational Laboratory Program**

Congress initiated the Lab Program in 1965 as part of the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which addressed the educational system's failure to provide all students with high-quality instruction and achieve high levels of performance. The Act provided financial support for school districts and states for additional staff, educational materials and resources, and capacity building. It also created a system of Regional Labs to develop and disseminate—in cooperation with schools, state education agencies, and research universities—ideas and programs for improving educational practices throughout the country. In 1994, the Regional Laboratory Program was re-authorized (Public Law 103-227) with the mission "to promote knowledge-based school improvement to help all students meet high standards and to help the nation meet the National Education Goals."

### **Labs Serve Their Regions**

Each Regional Lab is guided by a governing board that represents the constituents in its region—including teachers, researchers, and high-level policy makers. Under the guidance of their boards, Laboratories:

- work with states and localities to implement comprehensive school improvement strategies by providing information, training and technical assistance, and developing or implementing research-based programs;
- conduct development and applied research resulting in well-tested models for implementing systemic reform and for "scaling up" or expanding exemplary isolated reform efforts on a broader scale;
- promote widespread access to information regarding research and best practice;
- create communities of learners to engage collaboratively with the Laboratory in development and dissemination;
- cooperate with other ED-funded technical assistance providers to create a nationwide education information and assistance system that can support educators' and policy makers' efforts to improve education; and
- forge strong links to the research community to promote the creation of new knowledge to improve education.

Laboratories are expected to pay particular attention to rural areas and to districts and schools that serve high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students.

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## Labs Serve the Nation

The Regional Labs also work as a network, using their knowledge, experience, and expertise to develop and deliver products and services which benefit educators nationally. Over the last several years, the Regional Laboratory Network succeeded at:

- assisting states and communities in initiating charter schools by organizing statewide meetings on charter school legislation and implementation and by developing a Web site to support the national efforts of charter school founders, operators, parents, state legislators, and others interested in charter schools;
- engineering and implementing—in collaboration with the Secretary of Education—a nationwide initiative to identify and recognize exemplary local professional development programs;
- developing, testing, and disseminating the *Assessment Toolkit for Professional Developers*, a compendium of sample assessments, training activities, and student work in response to requests for assistance in this area;
- collaborating with four national education associations and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on the development of a framework for school districts to use to strengthen linkages between early childhood and elementary school programs;
- producing *Putting the Pieces Together: Comprehensive School-linked Strategies for Children and Families*, a guidebook that incorporates findings from educational research with the experiences of school staff and other practitioners who have worked on school-linked comprehensive strategies for children and families; and
- putting together a collection of 16 tested research-based models for improving teaching and learning, entitled *Tried and True: Tested Ideas for Teaching and Learning from the Regional Educational Laboratories*.

## Current Laboratory Priorities

The Laboratories are now working with hundreds of schools and school districts, as well as states, research institutions and community-based organizations, to explore effective ways to implement and disseminate educational reforms. Two priorities guide all Laboratory program work:

- helping educators and administrators “put the pieces of educational improvement together” systemically to achieve educational excellence and equity for all students; and
- helping educators and administrators expand systemic reform to benefit schools, and the educational programs within them, in all communities.

Each Laboratory also is developing a *specialty area* of expertise. This enables Laboratories to provide leadership and act as an expert resource both within their respective regions and to the Laboratory network. In addition, the specialty areas are aligned with dominant themes of the OERI Research Institutes and the national Research Centers they support to encourage strong links between the creation and use of knowledge.

For more information about the Regional Educational Laboratory Program please contact either:

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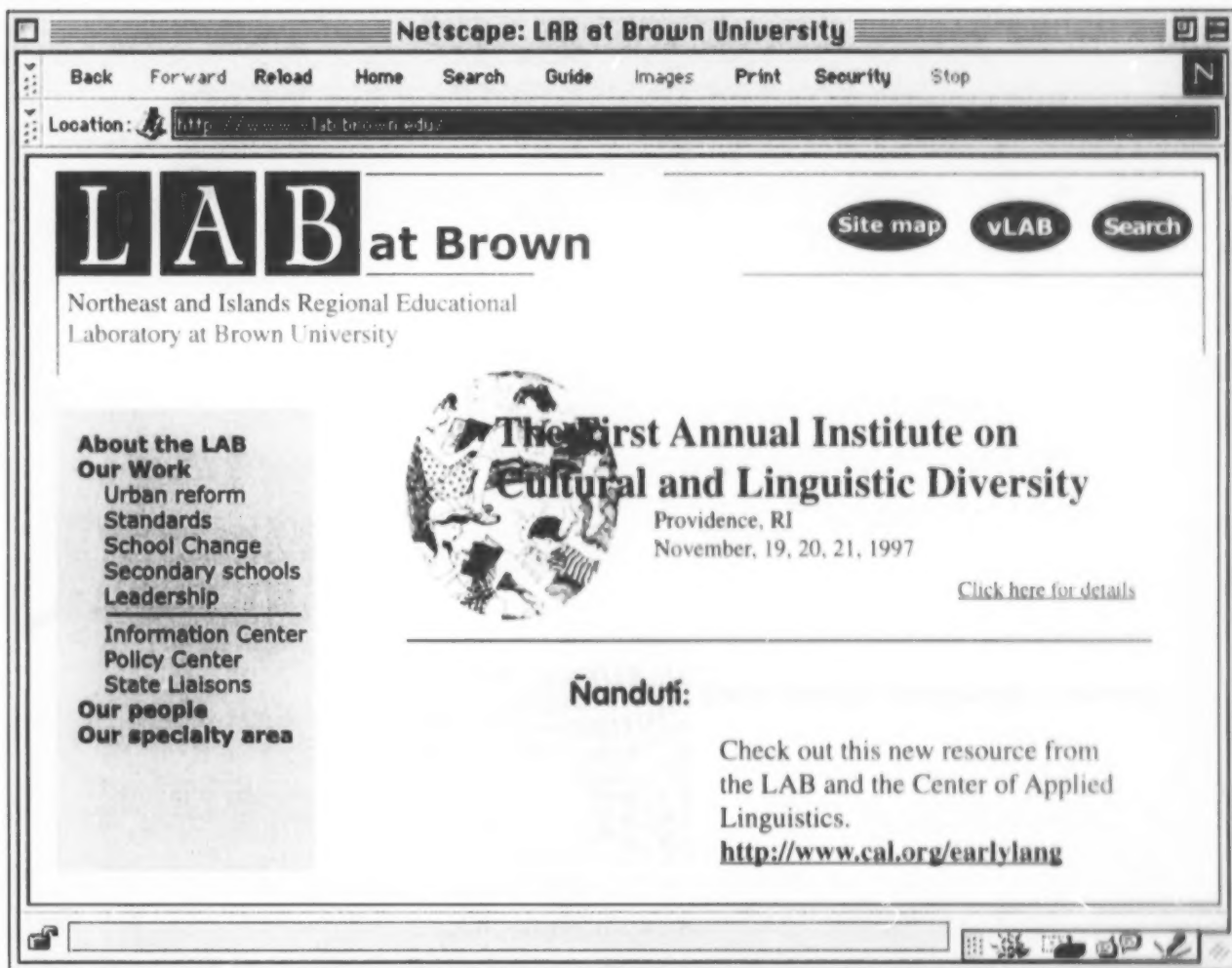
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## Contents

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|                                                                      |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Foreword. . . . .                                                    | iii |
| Northeast and Islands Laboratory at Brown University (LAB) . . . . . | 1   |
| Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) . . . . .          | 5   |
| Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) . . . . .                    | 9   |
| SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE) . . . . .         | 13  |
| North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) . . . . .      | 19  |
| Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) . . . . .        | 23  |
| Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) . . . . .      | 27  |
| WestEd . . . . .                                                     | 31  |
| Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) . . . . .          | 35  |
| Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) . . . . .        | 39  |



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## Northeast and Islands Laboratory at Brown University (LAB)

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**States Served:** Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York,  
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### Mission

To promote systemic school improvement in the Northeast and Islands region by supporting researchers who conduct collaborative inquiry alongside educational practitioners and community members. The LAB places special emphasis on developing effective approaches to meeting the educational needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Knowledge gained through inquiries into standards and assessment, school services, professional development, and community involvement is exchanged with policymakers and schools through publications, computer media, and LAB-facilitated workshops. In all of the LAB's work, equity is the highest priority, reflecting a commitment to helping all learners achieve excellence.

### Key Initiatives

*Urban School Reform.* The LAB works with schools and communities in urban settings—for example, Boston, MA; Hartford, CT; Providence, RI; Bridgeport, CT; and New York, NY—to evaluate existing strategies for reform and conduct on-site research into which reform approaches are most effective in building on the strengths of particular urban schools. While the LAB offers much of the professional guidance needed to implement these reforms, it also makes referrals and assists in the process of documenting school reform activities.

*Leadership and Professional Development.* The LAB conducts inquiry aimed at building leadership that improves teaching and learning by working with educators and education associations to understand how best to train and support practitioners. The LAB's work under this initiative also focuses on making the training offered to school staff better suited to the demands of diverse educational environments and more adaptable to changes in those environments.

*School Change and Community Involvement.* The LAB studies how approaches to reform work and what capacities and community involvement are important to sustaining reform, especially in high-poverty or linguistically and culturally diverse schools. Through this work the LAB seeks to understand the demands of school reform in diverse communities and to develop the abilities of schools in these communities to implement meaningful reform.

*Secondary School Restructuring.* The LAB helps states identify the needs of their student populations, implement professional development programs addressing the needs of their students, and foster effective communication between secondary schools and public institutions of higher education about how secondary schools can meet the needs of the students they serve.

*Standards, Assessment, and Instruction.* The LAB looks at how standards, assessments, and instructional practices affect school improvement. Through this work the LAB examines how new directions in educational thinking—such as the potentials of technology-based education—can improve educational practices to support the educational achievement of all students.

## **Signature Programs**

*Building Leadership and Organizational Capacity in Boston Cluster 7.* In this long-term collaborative project with Cluster 7 of the Boston Public Schools, the LAB is conducting school-based inquiry into how knowledge about effective urban school-change processes can guide systemic-reform policies. In the early stages of this work, the LAB served as facilitator at principals' meetings and study groups that have explored the issues surrounding professional development, standards alignment, and assessment.

*Community Engagement in Systemic Reform.* Schools that are collaborating with the LAB are all working to strengthen communication with their communities, broaden and deepen family involvement, and increase staff participation in family-involvement activities. In the initial phase of this work, teams of families, teachers, and administrators from each of the project sites worked intensively with LAB staff to devise plans to examine existing methods of communication, clarify the messages that each school was trying to communicate, determine how best to address previously unreached sectors of the community and increase family involvement.

*Implementing High Learning Standards with English Language Learners.* LAB staff work alongside teacher-researchers from four urban middle schools to examine classroom practices and school-wide and district policies with the goal of improving the education of English language learners to enable them to meet high standards. Currently, LAB staff are facilitating monthly professional development sessions and follow-up sessions for English language arts, bilingual, and English as a Second Language teachers and are collaborating with these teachers to plan next year's work.

*Indicators of Capacity: Readiness for Reform in High Poverty Elementary Schools.* The LAB is developing descriptions of capacities and resources so that its six partner schools can use them to assess their readiness for reform. After collecting data through focus groups, interviews, reviews of records, and a collaborative mapping process, the LAB has found that schools that: employ strategies for change that are tailored to meet the needs of their students; assume control over their own resources; and draw on staff expertise by using team approaches usually are highly effective at sustaining their efforts at school improvement.

*LAB Support Programs.* The LAB uses a variety of vehicles to support education reform in the region. The Information Center provides information about the LAB's applied research programs and offers referral to other sources of educational research information. The Policy Center facilitates a dialogue on current education policy issues for the region's educational reform community and provides up-to-date policy information to researchers. The LAB's vLAB (virtual LAB)—the electronic counterpart to the LAB—is a network that provides electronic access to information on a variety of effective educational reform programs and enhances the LAB's interactive communication with a variety of audiences. The LAB's State/Island Liaison

System creates partnerships with policy makers and education leaders in each state and island in the region to promote understanding of each other's education reform needs and disseminate knowledge on successful reform approaches.

### **Specialty Area**

*Language and Cultural Diversity.* Much of the LAB's research explores how education can better address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse populations. As part of one of its initiatives, the LAB sponsors inquiry into the ways that learning standards, portfolio assessment systems, and math and science instructional practices might be revised in order to challenge students from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds more effectively. Several pieces of the LAB's work in leadership and professional development also place an emphasis on developing community and practitioner leadership in linguistically and culturally diverse educational settings. The LAB is sponsoring "The First Annual Institute on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Problem Solving through Action Research" in November 1997 as an important step in this work. Within the LAB's "Urban Initiative," much of which involves collaboration with multi-cultural urban schools, the LAB also sponsors specific research into school-to-career strategies in urban settings. Finally, the LAB's inquiry into school change and community involvement works with linguistically and culturally diverse populations to understand both the kinds of interaction between schools and communities and the structures within schools that will support sustained school improvement.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*Academic Success for Students with Limited Formal Schooling: A Study of Boston's Haitian Literacy* is a study of a literacy program in the Boston Public Schools that is designed to meet the needs of Haitian students who enter school with limited formal schooling.

*What Policy Makers and Administrators Need to Know about Assessment Reform and English Language Learners* is a comprehensive overview of the implications of performance-based assessment reform on English language learners, which also provides guidelines for developing and implementing equitable assessment systems.

*Perspectives from the Field: Creating Portfolio Assessment Systems Inclusive of English Language Learners* is a guide that draws together the research and practical knowledge gained by states and districts while implementing large-scale portfolio assessment systems.

# LSS Laboratory for Student Success

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational  
Laboratory at Temple University  
Center for Research in Human Development  
and Education

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**Notice:** The Internet address for this website has officially changed to <http://www.temple.edu/LSS>. Although the previous address will continue to be supported for an indeterminate amount of time, it is advised that you alter your bookmarks now in order to reflect the change.

The Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) is one of ten Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U. S. Department of Education. The overarching goal of the LSS is to strengthen the capacity of the mid-Atlantic region--which includes Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Washington DC--to enact and sustain lasting systemic educational reform through collaborative programs of applied research and development and services to the field. In particular, LSS seeks to achieve high academic standards in urban schools in the mid-Atlantic region and nationally through a comprehensive program of urban education enhancement.

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## Mid-Atlantic Laboratory for Student Success (LSS)

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### Mission

To build capacity to bring about lasting improvements in the learning of the mid-Atlantic region's increasingly diverse student population. The ultimate goal of the LSS is to establish a system of research, development, and dissemination that connects schools, parents, community agencies, professional groups, and higher education institutions and that gradually expands reform efforts in the region and is part of a high-tech national system for exchanging information.

### Key Initiatives

Guided by the overarching mission of finding ways to achieve academic success for each student in the mid-Atlantic region—as well as in urban communities throughout the nation—the LSS aims to achieve what has in the past proven to be a difficult task: transforming research-based knowledge into useful tools that can be integrated into the educational reform process. Accordingly, the interdisciplinary team of LSS researchers and field-based professionals are engaged in a five-year program of work that includes three broad-based initiatives:

*A field-based development and applied research initiative* that focuses on (a) building a procedural knowledge base for identifying, developing, and implementing effective practices and policies that foster educational resilience and learning success for children and youth in the mid-Atlantic region, particularly those who live in isolated rural areas and inner-city communities; (b) identifying and studying ways to enhance institutional capacities that provide a coherent and coordinated system of delivery in efforts to connect schools, families, and the community in systemic ways in the service of healthy development and educational success of children and youth; and (c) developing knowledge-based products and communication processes that educators and related service providers can apply in their efforts to improve student outcomes and establish and sustain successful reform.

*A program of outreach and services to the field* that serves as a regional resource in facilitating and enhancing the capacity of the mid-Atlantic region for achieving student success. The LSS Services to the Field initiative includes three major components: (a) collecting and disseminating knowledge-based information and products on effective and promising practices and policies for grassroots educational and related services professionals, policymakers,

parents, students, and the general public, using multiple outreach strategies and tools; (b) providing sustained client-based assistance to state and local schools in implementing systemic improvements through an integrated series of professional development and technical assistance programs; and (c) establishing and sustaining collaborative demonstrations of whole-school reform with local schools.

*Forging strategic alliances and learning communities* to expand the LSS's outreach capacity for servicing the needs of the field by building on the resources and expertise of regional and national professional organizations, state education agencies, local school districts and schools, colleges and universities, and other cultural and education agencies. This initiative has resulted in the establishment of the Mid-Atlantic Network of Superintendents and Deans; a series of national invitational conferences on emerging issues and next-step plans co-sponsored by the LSS and a variety of educational and related services agencies at state and national levels; and collaborative studies with state education agencies and local schools in building the procedural knowledge base on how to implement what works in achieving student success.

### **Signature Programs**

*The Community for Learning program (CFL)* is a whole-school reform model that connects the school, the family, and the community to implement a coordinated approach to achieve student success. A major premise of CFL is that the national standards of educational outcomes can and must be upheld for all students, including those who are "at the margins." At the core of CFL is an integrated design framework that emphasizes the implementation of a powerful instructional program and a collaborative process that links the resources and expertise of schools with other learning environments, including homes, churches, libraries, public and private-sector workplaces, and postsecondary institutions. Education programs conducted in these environments are coordinated with the programs of governmental agencies, such as health and social services, housing, and law enforcement, and are connected with community revitalization efforts to create a broad-based commitment to improve learning and competence of children and youth and the adults who serve them—in short, a *Community for Learning*.

*20/20 Analysis for Instructional Planning* is a planning tool for developing an integrative service delivery plan that focuses on ensuring that students who show the least and most progress on significant outcome variables receive intensive instruction and related service support. The 20/20 Analysis provides school staff with an analytic procedure for identifying students most in need of special help within a given class, school, or district. The data sources used in conducting 20/20 Analyses are student achievement and other outcome data routinely collected by schools/districts. By identifying students in the lowest 20<sup>th</sup> percentile and highest 20<sup>th</sup> percentile in selected student outcome areas (e.g., achievement in specific subject matter areas, attendance, discipline referrals), school staff are able to pinpoint those students for whom the existing instructional and related service program delivery is least effective, and determine ways to refine and adapt present practice and policies to meet students' individual needs.

### **Specialty Area**

*Urban Education.* LSS's Urban Education Enhancement Program serves as a national resource for improving the capacity for healthy development and education of children and youth in this nation's urban communities. This program includes four major projects: (a) establishing collaborative demonstrations of whole-school reform led by local schools; (b) conducting studies of effective Title I schoolwide projects; (c) providing professional development and technical assistance to assist urban school districts in designing, implementing, and evaluating knowledge-based reforms; and (d) providing a national information dissemination program on what works in improving urban schools. The dissemination program includes national

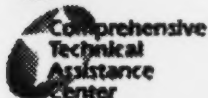
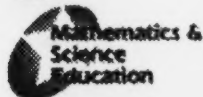
invitational conferences, discussion forums, and the dissemination of information and products through print, electronic media and professional organizations, and technical assistance provider agencies.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*Implementing School Reform: Practice and Policy Imperatives* examines key issues surrounding the implementation of Title I programs, and includes an overview of the research base as well as an analysis of the current state of education practice.

*Coordination, Cooperation, Collaboration* is a compendium of articles that provide an overview of what is known about coordinated, school-linked services for children and families.

*The Superintendents' and Deans' Summit on Transformation and Collaboration for Student Success*—issued in collaboration with the Mid-Atlantic Network of Superintendents and Deans—provides an overview of the proceedings of the LSS-sponsored Summit and includes major topics of discussion and next-step items on policy and professional development concerns.



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## Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL)

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**States Served:** Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia

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### Mission

To link the knowledge from research with the wisdom from practice to improve teaching and learning. This is accomplished by working with educators, researchers, policymakers, business leaders, families, students, and others to discover, develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative services, products, and practices.

### Key Initiatives

*AELaction.* This action research listserv—a free, facilitated forum on the Internet—electronically brings together more than 150 teachers, teacher educators, and researchers to exchange ideas about, and experiences with, classroom action research. Teachers often have innovative ideas to test, but little time to reflect during the school day. In *AELaction*, teachers turn to listserv moderators and subscribers for help in formulating questions, choosing data collection and documentation procedures, and receiving information and feedback on issues they want to explore. The listserv is but one of AEL's action research initiatives and grows out of more than a decade of helping teachers investigate education issues.

*KERA.* AEL continues its qualitative policy study of the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA) in four small, rural school districts. Begun in 1990, the study's first five years focused on implementation of critical aspects of the law—instructional changes, the new non-graded primary program, school-based decision making, integrated services, and the new funding formula. Current research looks at the conditions under which KERA changes educator behaviors and studies the effects of those changes on students.

*Quest.* Learning the hows and whys of continuous improvement and how readily school communities can implement school improvement is the goal of a group of schools participating in a research project with AEL. On a "Quest" for school improvement, these schools are not looking to import a program to fix today's problem. Rather, they are reaching out to form a "community of learners" that sets a clear school vision, studies and discusses ideas from current literature and their own experiences, builds a school community that creates habits of collaboration and thoughtfulness, and promotes an environment for improving student learning.

*State Projects.* Four projects, designed jointly with education leaders in each state, complement individual state education initiatives. In **Kentucky**, the study looks at the development and assessment of student writing portfolios in schools where high percentages of

students have consistently improved their writing scores, to identify how these schools have shown more rapid improvement than others. In **Tennessee**, the study focuses on ways to make the Internet a part of meaningful instruction in classrooms. The project relies on the best practices of a group of teachers interested in successful classroom use of the Internet. In **Virginia**, the work concentrates on developing a framework for delivering technical assistance that supports the academic achievement of all students, especially those in high-need schools. In **West Virginia**, the study focuses on career guidance strategies in building school-to-work systems in local school districts.

### **Signature Programs**

*Rural and Urban Images: Voices of Girls in Science, Mathematics, and Technology.* Funded by the National Science Foundation, this project is testing interventions to help girls do well and feel confident in the study and practice of science, mathematics, and technology—subjects where girls typically do not participate as fully as boys. The project asks: (1) How effective are support systems in increasing girls' persistence in these subjects? (2) Do the effects of interventions in urban and rural settings differ? and (3) How effective in teaching content are materials derived from rural environments?

*Family Connections.* This parent-tested, teacher-approved tool not only helps families and young children have fun together while learning, but also enables schools to boost parent involvement. The guides are either sent home weekly with children or delivered to the home by family educators. Each issue offers a brief, easy-to-read message for parents and a read-aloud selection for parents and children. The guides' do-at-home activities use materials commonly found in most homes and require little preparation. *Family Connections 1* was designed for families of preschool children, *Family Connections 2* for families of kindergarten and early primary children. A Spanish version of the guides—*Relaciones Familiares 1*—is also available.

*Interdisciplinary Teamed Instruction.* A research-based strategy for curriculum integration, this interdisciplinary approach to instruction focuses on dissolving boundaries between disciplines of knowledge, between students and teachers, and between schools and communities. The professional development program includes publications to help understand the whats, whys, and how-tos of curriculum integration; on-site training and weeklong institutes that focus on team building and curriculum development; action research to evaluate the effects of integration on teaching and learning; and a moderated electronic listserv that provides subscribers a forum for sharing questions, insights, resources, and experiences.

*QUILT.* A long-term professional development program, QUILT is designed to increase student learning and thinking by improving teacher use of classroom questioning techniques. QUILT represents a comprehensive approach to enhancing student engagement in learning through questioning. The program helps teachers create a classroom environment that is more reflective, more student centered, more inquiry based, and more metacognitive. In QUILT classrooms, students understand how questioning and answering can help them learn, use effective questioning themselves, and become more actively involved in their learning.

### **Specialty Area**

AEL's *Rural Education* specialty works to promote the integrity of rural, small schools in a global economy. Its guiding focus is to foster the essential relationship between rural schools and their communities. Staff work regionally to help rural schools and communities improve school readiness of preschool children, school-to-work opportunities of K-12 students, and academic achievement of all students. Nationally, staff provide leadership, share expertise, establish partnerships, and inform debate through development of a variety of publications, teleseminars, and electronic networks and through participation in practitioner- and research-specific analyses of the National Center for Education Statistics databases and sponsor a

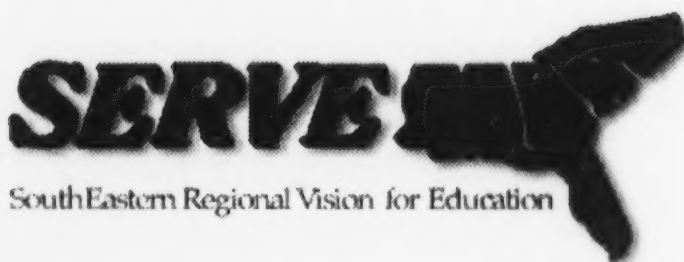
National Academy of Rural School Practitioners and Scholars—which operates, in part, via a moderated electronic network to link rural school teachers and administrators with those who study and write about rural schools and communities.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*Relaciones Familiares*, the Spanish version of AEL's popular *Family Connections* publications, helps Head Start programs and others serving Spanish-speaking families increase home—school partnerships.

The latest issue of *Notes from the Field*—a publication of AEL's study of the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act—discusses insights learned from the field work of the past year, carried out in six primary classrooms in four rural school districts.

An AEL *Policy Brief* entitled "The Telecommunications Act of 1996: A Guide for Educators" helps educators and states take advantage of the \$2.25 billion annual federal allocation to support school and classroom access to telecommunication services—including the Internet.



South Eastern Regional Vision for Education

- *SERVE Home*
- *About SERVE*
- *Web Site Map*
- *Lab Programs*
- *Eisenhower Consortium*
- *SEIR\*TEC*
- *Comprehensive Center*
- *Institutes*
- *Products & Publications*
- *Guest Book*

**W**elcome to the South Eastern Regional Vision for Education! Our website highlights many of SERVE's approaches to school improvement. We encourage you to use it as a tool for accessing our services and contacting us to share ideas, questions, and concerns.

## Special Announcements!

### Special Events

**New** Visit SERVE's new Teacher Leadership website.

**Free** Free *How To Improve Schools* report see Guest Book for more information.

*Send comments and suggestions to [webmaster@serve.org](mailto:webmaster@serve.org)*

*Updated 11/12/97*

This website was produced with funds from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, on contract no. RJ96006701.

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## SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE)

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South Carolina Department of Education

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**Mission**

To promote and support the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for all learners in the Southeast.

**Key Initiatives**

SERVE's region-wide applied research and development program builds the capacity of schools and districts to assess their needs and progress toward improvement goals. The research and development program consists of projects that focus on engaging partner schools, districts, and states in developing products and services that recognize local responsibility for monitoring the success of educational practices.

*Improving High Schools' Self-assessment Capabilities by Providing an Organizational and Educational Basis for Institutionalizing School Development.* SERVE is working with six school districts to pilot a self-assessment process, The KITE, to better understand how an analysis and understanding of a school's organizational structures can support educational change and reform. The KITE, developed in Europe, helps schools evaluate the feasibility of attaining their goals within the environmental and cultural structures existing in the school. It also provides a means for generating alternatives to overcome barriers preventing schools from being successful.

*Teacher Professional Growth.* SERVE is developing, testing, and providing materials and protocols that scale up efforts to ground teachers' professional growth and ability to make major changes in their approach to instruction through self-assessment and peer review, with special emphasis on teachers who serve disadvantaged students. SERVE and its clients identified a need to support teachers in building assessment capacity. Thus, SERVE's R&D Department is publishing an annual magazine, *Assessment Hot Spots*, which will highlight progress made by SERVE's demonstration schools and districts. Additionally, SERVE continues to offer a workshop for professional developers based on the Regional Laboratories' *Toolkit for Professional Developers: Alternative Assessment*. The trainer's module is undergoing improvement changes and follow-up session instructions are being added. A matching teacher module is now available for intensive assessment training.

*Formative Teacher Evaluation.* SERVE has worked with teachers from North Carolina to develop and pilot a formative evaluation process for use by teachers. This process was designed to support the development of opportunities for teachers to engage in the self-reflection and peer coaching necessary for school reform. SERVE currently is building on this pilot experience to find out what kinds of teacher growth have occurred and what barriers still exist. Additionally, SERVE is exploring ways to scale up district efforts toward professional growth.

*Promising Practices in Reading and Technology.* SERVE is working to develop products and build support groups that help struggling districts and schools better understand what they need to do to implement quality reading and technology programs. Site visits have been conducted in schools in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi to identify promising practices that can be shared through video and written products. Case reports on the sites have been written and five videos and accompanying written products in technology and reading are planned.

### **Signature Programs**

In **Alabama**, SERVE is collaborating with Educators for Social Responsibility and the Alabama state Department of Education to train all middle and elementary school teaching staff in a poor rural district in a comprehensive conflict resolution approach. The two middle schools and three elementary schools are over 50 percent minorities, have over percent of their students on free/reduced-price lunch and have over one-third of the students living in single-parent homes.

In **Florida**, SERVE has committed to a four year intensive working relationship with an elementary and middle school to support the integration of technology into the curriculum. As an initial step, SERVE is working with educational staff to design professional development activities to ensure that all staff, at every level of technological expertise, will receive technology-related training tailored to individual needs and learning styles. Once staff are comfortable and proficient with the use of technology, integration into all aspects of the curriculum will begin.

In **Georgia**, SERVE is working with an inner-city school that serves over 1100 students in grades pre-K through seven and whose student population is over 50 percent minorities and receiving free and reduced-price lunches. SERVE is working with science and math teachers to identify and practice new techniques for delivering instruction to a diverse student population; view master teachers in actual teaching situations and use the information to plan and deliver lessons to their own students; and practice self-assessment and self-reflection through journal writing and videotaping.

In **Mississippi**, SERVE has initiated a Delta Technology partnership with two high schools to support the integration of technology into their curriculum. Technology equipment and software programs have been installed and curriculum revisions in science have begun in conjunction with staff and student training. Plans for the project include an incremental expansion of the use of technology in English, social studies and mathematics. The project is committed to six goals: total school immersion in teaching, learning, and state-of-the-art technology; resource-rich classroom environments where teachers and students have the skills, learning programs, materials, and equipment to ensure success; quality management of incremental and replicable phases of the project; technology hubs in the media centers that support faculty and students; support for designing curriculum and in-service training for teachers and students; and a strong formative evaluation component.

In **South Carolina**, SERVE is working with a very poor, rural elementary school to design a professional development initiative that acts as a catalyst for change. The results from a thorough analysis of student achievement data have been used to guide programmatic changes, including strengthening the preschool program to ensure that each child enters school ready to learn. SERVE is working with teachers in the school to understand how and why to make data-based decisions for improving learning.

### **Specialty Area**

*Early Childhood Education.* SERVE is developing its ability to provide expert leadership and support to the early childhood community nationwide. In 1995 staff conducted a national needs assessment, using the Laboratory network and other national associations, to identify critical needs and design a response system. Based on the results of this assessment, SERVE is:

- establishing a research agenda and identifying sites for data collection and development activities in order to advance new knowledge;
- planning for the development and dissemination of products, publications, training and technical assistance activities to build capacity and inspire innovation;
- establishing a resource and referral system and forming coalitions and networks to address critical issues; and
- developing plans to influence national policy development.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*Achieving Your Vision of Professional Development: How to Assess Your Needs and Get What You Want* pulls together the most current research on professional development and change for educators looking to accelerate their professional growth and the improvement of student learning.

*Reducing School Violence: Building a Framework for School Safety* is designed to assist teachers, school principals, district administrators, resource officers, students, parents, and others in creating safe environments where learning is the primary focus.

*Resources for School Improvement: How to Improve Schools Now* addresses an expressed need by school personnel in the region for information about approaches, strategies, models, and programs for successfully implementing change.

# NCREL

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

About NCREL

Product Catalog

What's New

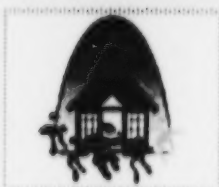
Search



Pathways to School Improvement Internet Server offers easy to find, concise, research-based information on school improvement. The Pathways server provides the best information on a variety of categories including: Assessment, At-Risk Children and Youth, Goals and Standards, Governance/Management, leadership, Learning, Literacy, Mathematics, Parent and Family Involvement, Professional Development, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, School-to-Work transition, Science, and Technology.



First In The World Consortium The mission of First in the World, an educational consortium committed to the next generation of teaching and learning in mathematics and science, is to ensure that all of our students achieve exemplary levels of mathematical and scientific understanding in international comparisons, through creating partnerships and networks; applying research; and designing, sharing, implementing, and disseminating exemplary programs and practices.



The Leadership Academy, sponsored by NCREL's Center for School and Community Development provides educators with learning resources and tools to support school improvement efforts, opportunities to network with researchers and practitioners, and information about future events and resources.



Learning Through Technology: A Planning and Implementation Guide helps educators and community members develop a comprehensive learning and technology plan. Learning Through Technology is divided into six sections (1) Planning to Plan (2) Building a Knowledge Base (3) Establishing General Directions (4) Implementation Priorities and Strategies (5) Evaluation (6) Revising for Improvement.



The Midwest Consortium for Mathematics and Science Education page contains information about the Consortium's staff and activities. It also contains links to other Eisenhower Consortia and to other Mathematics and Science Education web sites.

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## North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

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**Director:** Dr. Jeri Nowakowski

**States Served:** Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin

**OERI Program Officer:** Mary Campbell (202) 219-2164; [mary\\_campbell@ed.gov](mailto:mary_campbell@ed.gov)

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### Mission

To strengthen and support schools and communities so that all students achieve standards of educational excellence. NCREL accomplishes its mission through policy analysis, professional development, and technical assistance, and by leveraging the power of partnerships and networks.

### Key Initiatives

*Center for Scaling Up.* This Center focuses on the R&D issues related to taking effective programs and systemic change efforts to scale. The Center's work includes building a knowledge base on the "science of scaling up," supporting the effective use of educational technology, and providing professional development opportunities and resources for educators. Specifically, the Center focuses on technology both as a device to scale up effective practices and as something itself to be scaled up in classrooms throughout the region.

*Center for School and Community Development.* As it builds a knowledge base on productive schools, this Center seeks to identify the key levers for turning low-performing schools into high-performing ones—levers that include school-based interventions, leadership practices, and parent and community involvement strategies. The Center's products and activities include tools for assessing school productivity and leadership skills, academies for school leaders, resources for promoting school-family partnerships, and information packets on school readiness.

*Center for Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum.* This Center was created on the premise that improved learning is the ultimate goal of systemic reform. Its purpose is to collect and create cutting-edge research on learning to assist educators in the field and inform the work of the other Centers. The Center's primary activities include the co-development with teachers of problem-based learning activities, direct technical assistance and network-building with schools and districts, and the development of field-tested teaching and learning resources, like the EPSS (Electronic Performance Support System) Website.

*Evaluation and Policy Information Center.* This Center provides evaluation and policy analysis services to support systemic reform efforts across the region. Activities include tracking education reform issues in the region, studying leadership and governance patterns at the state and local levels, and studying the impact of student assessment practices. Evaluation reports and policy syntheses ensure that policymakers and community members have access

to high-quality information on education policies and the effectiveness of reform efforts. Internal evaluation activities support and enhance the development of NCREL products and services.

### **Signature Programs**

*Learning With Technology Course.* This six-session course helps teachers of Grades 4-8 integrate technology into instruction in ways that promote engaged learning and improve student achievement. Participants analyze print and video scenarios, review sample lessons, conduct Internet searches, and plan technology-enhanced lessons. Participants also receive a manual containing a planning framework, technology glossary, tips for evaluating software, and step-by-step guides to finding and using Internet resources, including NCREL's *Pathways* server. This fall, *Learning With Technology* will be offered by intermediate service agencies throughout NCREL's region. To ensure consistent quality across the region, all course facilitators must first participate in a two-day Facilitators Academy conducted by NCREL.

*Pathways to School Improvement.* This award-winning, interactive Web-site provides summaries of the latest research on 19 critical school improvement issues: math, science, literacy, technology, assessment, goals and standards, curriculum, governance and organizational management, community support systems, leadership, school-to-work transition, parent and family involvement, safe and drug-free schools, professional development, preservice education, learning styles, at-risk students, early childhood education, and instruction. Each issue includes an overview, goals, action steps, a list of common pitfalls and tips for avoiding them, alternative points of view, illustrative cases, and a list of contacts. Other features include a "Trip Planner" to help visitors make the most of the site, a "Users Corner" where educators can share strategies for using *Pathways*, and "Timely Topics," which provides information on a current topic, answers to frequently asked questions, and descriptions of related legislation.

*Strategic Teaching and Reading Project.* STRP is a research-based combination of professional development and classroom intervention that seeks to improve classroom instruction through sustained staff development and improve student reading ability at all levels in K-12 schools. The use of prior knowledge, text structure, word meaning, and inferencing, with metacognition integrated throughout the process, is the core of the STRP curriculum. These five strategies provide a framework for improved instruction in all content areas and help students become responsible and independent learners. Evaluations across a broad range of schools and student types show that STRP improves student reading comprehension.

### **Specialty Area**

As the *Technology* specialty laboratory, NCREL has taken the lead in identifying critical questions about technology utilization that are being raised by educators at every level, school and district administrators, school board members, community members, and policymakers. The Lab also is conducting, commissioning, and/or identifying reviews of the research literature to address these questions. Finally, NCREL will identify any gaps in the literature and develop a research agenda to begin to fill those gaps.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*The Captured Wisdom™ Series* is a collection of videotapes and CD-ROMs that takes viewers inside real classrooms where teachers are making meaningful and creative uses of technology in subjects that range from reading to geography and history to science.

*The Engaged Learning Safari Web Site* invites teachers, administrators, and community members to pack their "Travel Trunks" with multimedia resources and artifacts and join a group of their peers on an "Engaged Learning Expedition" in which they collaborate on a school reform issue or interdisciplinary curriculum project.

*The Pathways to School Improvement* is a comprehensive Web Site where school improvement teams and individual educators will find information and resources they need, including in-depth discussions of 19 key issues in school improvement, an array of multimedia resources, a self-assessment "Trip Planner," a discussion center where visitors can share strategies for using the site, lists of important contacts, and links to other Web sites. Visit *Pathways* at <http://www.ncrel.org/pathways.htm>.

# Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

"SEDL is the regional education laboratory serving Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. SEDL conducts applied research and development, delivers training, and provides technical assistance to K-12 educators and decision makers."



**SEDL**

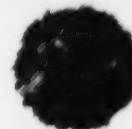
Orient yourself with guides to SEDL's programs, staff and related websites.

**Content**

Explore the world of SEDL products and services arranged by topic.

**Learning Communities**

Visit SEDL's diverse communities of learners.



[\[Products and Services\]](#) [\[Find It!\]](#) [\[New Items\]](#) [\[Feedback\]](#) [\[SEDLDate Calendar\]](#)

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## Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)

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**States Served:** Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas

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### Mission

To find, share, and sustain effective solutions for the most urgent problems facing educational systems, practitioners, and decision-makers in the southwestern United States. SEDL's particular emphasis is on ensuring educational equality for children and youth who live in poverty; who are Hispanic, African-American, or other minorities; or who have mental or physical exceptionalities.

### Key Initiatives

SEDL's work is organized under six inter-related research, development, and dissemination goals:

- Enhancing family and community involvement in education;
- Addressing diversity: language and culture;
- Aligning and supporting policy development;
- Promoting instructional coherence;
- Applying technology to restructuring and learning; and
- Changing the organization and management of schooling.

Four key initiatives frame SEDL's most recent accomplishments around a comprehensive set of inter-related projects that address the above goals:

*Comprehensive Action Team (CAT) Development Model.* The CAT Model is based on the principle of self-reliance within a community. The model focuses on the skill and relationship building aspects of collaborative partnerships of teachers, parents, and other community leaders convened to develop and implement school improvement initiatives that address unique local needs. The model eventually will be replicated in multiple sites. Currently, five sites, one in each state of the region, are progressing through the development of school-community partnerships. In this work, SEDL staff, for example, have been instrumental in assisting in the establishment of a Family Resource Center in West Memphis, Arkansas; the delivery of a treatment regimen for children with acuity problems related to reading disabilities and behavior issues; and the hiring of two parents by local school officials as a result of their participation in the Albuquerque Rio Grande Human Services Collaborative. Similar accomplishments have been noted in other sites.

*Educator Exchange and Intercultural Colloquia.* SEDL is in a unique position to promote educational improvement strategies for use by schools along the U.S./Mexico border. For example, SEDL staff are working closely with officials from the Texas and New Mexico Education Agencies and their Mexican counterparts to sponsor joint meetings of school administrators and teachers to share educational experiences and promote teacher exchanges. One result is that teachers and staff development experts have interned in Mexican schools to expand their understanding of schooling in Mexico, as well as the relationship of student characteristics to curriculum designs. Their Mexican counterparts also interned in the United States. Emerging results indicate an enhanced understanding of bi-cultural professional development strategies, teacher exchange programs, and better coordinated collaborative research initiatives.

*Promoting Instructional Coherence.* The underlying premise of this initiative is that systemic school reforms depend on effective linkages among teachers, students, and the curricula. Accordingly, curriculum frameworks are viewed as the bridges between standards and the curriculum that influence the achievement of two key goals: "putting the pieces together" and "scaling up." SEDL staff have identified vertical teams from school districts in each of the five states in the region to participate in the development of a regional network of educational reform (PICNET) and promote the use of structured approaches (resulting from extensive case study research) to further the development of curriculum frameworks.

*Creating Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement.* The goal of this initiative is to increase the frequency with which school staff (teachers and administrators) examine the quality and integrity of their own work, question its power to enable students to be successful learners, and adopt new practices in response to documented stages of development. SEDL staff, for example, have conducted a comprehensive review of the literature, developed an instrument to gauge the growth of sites as they become professional learning communities. Staff currently are working with a select number of schools for the purpose of studying the processes used to establish such communities. Another result of the initiative has been the increase in invitations to SEDL staff to lead discussions on the issue with multiple and varied groups of educators in the region.

### **Signature Programs**

*The Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science Teaching (SCIMAST) Professional Development Awards Site* in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is helping teachers prepare their students for the transition from middle school to high school mathematics by developing a common vision of systemic mathematics education reform and its implications for effective teaching.

*The SCIMAST Professional Development Awards Site* in Albuquerque, New Mexico, provides staff development activities for a core team of teachers and school administrators who are learning investigative strategies to improve teaching and learning in science and mathematics by using the principles of ecology to study a five-acre wildlife sanctuary.

*The SCIMAST Professional Development Awards Site* in Konawa, Oklahoma, is helping teachers improve the teaching of science in a more experiential fashion by emphasizing cooperative learning and alternative assessment strategies and participating in field and laboratory studies during the summer. SEDL staff are working in other similar projects in Lago Vista, Odessa, and Brownsville, Texas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

*The Comprehensive Action Team Project* in the Fabens, Texas, school district focuses on parent involvement, parenting skills, and adult education as entry strategies for working with parents to help reduce drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancies, and instances of domestic violence.

## Specialty Area

*Language and Cultural Diversity.* SEDL staff are engaged in research, syntheses activities and networking to address issues related to the educational needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Accordingly, among other initiatives, SEDL is examining the characteristics of schools that are particularly effective in promoting improved outcomes for diverse students; valid assessment methods; alternative assessment procedures for diverse students; and ways of engaging the support of parents and communities.

SEDL staff are developing dialogue strategies as a community tool to address issues of language and culture in education. The underlying premise of this initiative emphasizes the roles of educational research, development, and technical assistance to help local communities and schools build their capacity to carry out improvements, especially for schools with large concentrations of linguistically and culturally diverse student populations. SEDL also has distributed numerous copies of the highly successful tele-seminar video tape "Diversity, Dialogue, and Delivery," which is available in full Spanish text.

In addition, SEDL is collecting information on Native American education programs in the region and entering into collaborative agreements with interested parties to plan the Second Annual Conference for Secondary Education for Limited English Proficient Students. Finally, schools that are successful with diverse students are being investigated to enhance SEDL's understanding of school improvement tools that are particularly effective for diverse learning communities.

## Selected Recent Products

*Directory of Science—Rich Resources in the Southwest* provides extensive information on where to take students on potential field trips to aquariums, botanical and zoological gardens, museums, science centers, and nature and environmental centers in the region.

*Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement*, summarizes what professional learning communities look like and how they operate, and identifies the outcomes for staff and students when educators organize a learning community within a school.

*The State Networking Report: Progress, Policies, and Partnerships Bring Internet Connectivity to K-12 Schools* (in collaboration with the Texas Education Network (TENET) analyzes national trends in K-12 telecommunications and is supplemented with detailed profiles of K-12 network activities for each of the 50 states and Puerto Rico.

# **McREL...**

*...Making a Difference*

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## Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory

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**States Served:** Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming

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### Mission

McREL is dedicated to making a difference in the quality of education and learning for all through excellence in applied research, product development, and service. In carrying out its mission, McREL works collaboratively with its clients to improve educational policy and practice through the application of knowledge from research, development, and experience.

### Key Initiatives

McREL is engaged in applied research, development, service, and dissemination initiatives designed to provide educators with the tools, strategies, and materials needed to "put the pieces of educational reform together" and to "scale up" systemic reform to encompass a broader range of diverse educational contexts and students.

*Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.* McREL is developing tools and processes to assist schools, districts, and states in creating standards-based educational systems in which standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned. McREL has published a *Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks* which covers 14 subject areas and incorporates the work of numerous national professional groups and organizations. From this work McREL is deriving "essential" standards, identifying "core instructional elements," selecting performance-based assessment models, and constructing a database of assessment activities.

*Human Development, Learning, and Motivation.* McREL is developing various grade level versions of teacher belief and practice self-assessment tools. This battery includes measures of student motivation and student views of teacher practices. Applying the *Learner Centered Psychological Principles* to teacher education programs, and identifying effective classroom practices that address the needs of minority or at-risk students also are part of this initiative.

*Organizational Learning and Development.* This initiative examines how leadership and management, information systems, and stakeholder engagement influence organizational learning in schools and districts. A data base of resource documents continues to be updated. Models and tools are being developed to assist administrators in managing educational change, effectively using available information, and involving parents and communities in the school improvement process.

*Systems Integration and Systemic Change.* This initiative applies the models, tools, and processes developed in seven long-term partner sites within the McREL region. McREL also is developing a "toolbox" of strategies and instruments that can be used to guide systemic improvement efforts. These methods and tools will be packaged as a stand-alone change support system for schools and districts nationwide.

*Services to State and Local Education Agencies.* While the Laboratory responds to many service requests from its region, the core of McREL's field services initiative is the long term partnership established with the State Education Agency and a Local Education Agency in each of the seven states in the region. The work conducted in these strategic service sites focuses on a wide range of issues including strategic planning, design of assessment systems, implementation of accreditation systems, support for a charter school start-up, and technology planning and implementation assistance. The lessons learned in these locations are documented and disseminated to other jurisdictions as part of McREL's scaling up initiative.

### **Signature Programs**

Over the past few years, McREL has been working to develop major programs that have broad application to K-12 education and that hold promise for improving the educational performance and long-term success of students across the nation.

*Comprehensive School Mathematics Program (CSMP).* McREL's *Comprehensive School Mathematics Program* provides a complete K-6 Mathematics experience for students of all ability levels—actively involving students in the content and application of mathematics, not simply drilling them in arithmetic. The material is sequenced in spiral form so that students continuously encounter each content area throughout the program. CSMP presently is used in schools in over 35 states.

*Dimensions of Learning.* *Dimensions of Learning* is a framework for organizing, describing, and developing research-based teaching strategies that engage students in five basic types of thinking involved in meaningful learning. Additionally, the framework offers a way of integrating the major instructional models by showing how they are connected and where the overlaps occur. *Dimensions of Learning* is used in all states and abroad and has been translated into Spanish.

*Literacy Plus.* *Literacy Plus* takes a holistic, integrated approach to teaching reading, writing, vocabulary and reasoning. A Resource Guide provides teachers with over 180 strategies that are appropriate to different stages of literacy development. Literature units are available at all K-8 grade levels and are based on various genres and themes. Unique to *Literacy Plus* is a semantic cluster approach to vocabulary instruction. *Literacy Plus* is used in over 40 states.

*Designing Standards-Based Districts, Schools, and Classrooms.* This program provides districts with a process that allows them to address specific issues that are central to the design of a locally developed approach to standards-based education. In general, the program allows for participating districts or schools to walk through a series of questions, the answers to which form the parameters around which a district or school can construct its own implementation model. The program usually involves a McREL consultant working with school or district personnel over a period of one to three years.

### **Specialty Area**

McREL places a special emphasis on *Curriculum, Learning, and Instruction*. To provide national leadership in this area, McREL is building on its prior efforts to synthesize and align standards. The Laboratory is developing and disseminating resource materials, monitoring

and synthesizing research literature, providing staff development sessions, sponsoring conferences and workshops, participating in regional and national forums, and developing partnerships with Education Department-funded institutions and providers nationwide.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education* synthesizes and aligns 255 standards and nearly 4,000 accompanying benchmarks from over 100 national- and state-level standards documents in 14 subject areas.

*Teaching Reading in the Content Areas* is a resource for teachers, staff development specialists, reading coordinators, and parents that includes 40 innovative instructional strategies to improve students' understanding when reading for content.

The *For Our Students, For Ourselves* (videotapes) program includes a user manual, viewer guides, and one video that demonstrates the application of the American Psychological Association's learner-centered principles in three different high schools, and another video that documents the stories of change for teachers, students, and staff members as they adopted learner-centered practices in their schools.

# WestEd

IMPROVING EDUCATION THROUGH RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE

About WestEd

Our Work

Resources

What's New

SEARCH    FEEDBACK

**U**nprecedented social changes and technological innovations are sweeping us and our children into the 21st century. As never before, teachers, schools and their communities seek innovative strategies for transforming schools into effective enterprises for learning.

**W**estEd acts as a catalyst and mentor for improving schools. Working with the entire education community, WestEd offers the knowledge and support needed to equip all students, especially those most underserved, with the skills and capabilities to lead satisfying, productive lives.

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## WestEd

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**Director:** Dr. Glen H. Harvey

**States Served:** Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah

**OERI Program Officer:** Sharon Horn (202) 219-2203; [sharon\\_horn@ed.gov](mailto:sharon_horn@ed.gov)

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### Mission

To challenge and enable educators to provide quality learning for all students by applying the best available knowledge from research, development and experience. In carrying out its mission, WestEd works with clients to develop the tools, processes and materials that policymakers and practitioners need to put the components of reform together and to scale up successful practice in ways that will improve teaching and learning for a broader range of students.

### Key Initiatives

WestEd is engaged in an array of initiatives representing complementary strategies for supporting systemic improvement.

*Whole School Reform* develops better ways for schools to transform themselves from a collection of programs into coherent, continuously improving organizations concerned with quality. Key activities focus on developing a school support strategy that uses assessment to change the culture of the school system, and co-developing, or adapting and implementing, three Johns Hopkins University school improvement models: Talent Development Schools, Success for All, and Roots and Wings.

*Language and Cultural Diversity* efforts enhance the systemic and collaborative capacity of teachers, school systems and communities to reshape school structures and culture to serve students equitably in our increasingly diverse society. The program of work emphasizes adaptive professional development strategies and a model support system for paraprofessionals.

*State Alliance Projects* are organized to develop and support state consortia (including schools, districts, and institutions of higher education) in working together over time on a high-priority state improvement initiative. In Arizona, four consortia are working to develop and implement assessment systems to measure student learning; a consortium in Nevada is implementing distance education and technology application programs in five rural county districts; work in Utah focuses on a results-based regional model for professional development involving six districts and a local university.

*Policy Support and Studies Program* assists education policymakers by providing objective, research-based policy analysis, facilitating comprehensive deliberation of policy alternatives and conducting in-depth studies of the impact of reforms on schools and students. The program tracks and maps regional trends and reforms, synthesizes relevant information, and disseminates it through electronic mail, fax-on-demand, and print materials.

*Early Intervention, Care and Education* integrates the education community with other social services agencies, private organizations, community groups, and family members in planning and delivering comprehensive services for at-risk families with young children.

## **Signature Programs**

*Math Case Methods Project.* In operation since 1989, the Math Case Methods Project is a professional development program for teachers that enhances their knowledge of specific topics in mathematics and increases their capacity to review and improve instructional practices. Discussions of teacher-written descriptions (cases) of classroom practice allow participants to collaborate in examining and analyzing a range of approaches to math teaching and learning. Project staff work collaboratively with teacher leaders, teacher educators, professional associations, and leaders of systemic initiatives to develop their capacity to facilitate math case discussions. Research and evaluation activities show that case discussions produce a significant growth in teachers' mathematics knowledge. As teachers develop, 'test out,' and refine math teaching strategies in their classrooms, students benefit from enhanced learning opportunities.

*The Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers.* A principal activity of WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies (CCFS), the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers is committed to increasing the availability and quality of child care for all children under age three and influencing policies and practices that have an impact on young children. This nationally acclaimed Infant/Toddler Caregiver Program provides training in how caregivers can create nurturing and educationally supportive environments for children in their care. Topics include infant/toddler social-emotional development, caregiving routines, language development, cognitive development and learning, culturally responsive care, and creating partnerships with parents. Through direct work with professional caregivers as well as with audiences who are responsible for educating, training, and preparing populations of caregivers, the program has achieved broad and deep influence on early childhood care at the regional and national levels. In California, for example, over eight thousand caregivers and 70 higher education faculty have participated in program training. Research-based videos and print materials are available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

*Western Assessment Collaborative.* The work of the Western Assessment Collaborative (WAC) focuses on supporting schools and districts in standards-based reform. In the San Francisco Bay Area, WAC works in close collaboration with the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative (regional recipients of an Annenberg Challenge award). WAC provides consultation, professional development services, and coaching to schools and districts to support them in establishing standards for student performance, developing systems to measure achievement of those standards, and developing the capacity and organizational culture to sustain standards-based reform. Through close work with one district, WAC staff are developing the concept of Accountability as Public Engagement (APE). The APE project is working with a district study group to develop a process for facilitating greater community-wide participation in explorations of student performance through the use of public accountability dialogues.

## **Specialty Area**

*Assessment and Accountability.* Focusing on assessment as a vehicle for whole school reform, WestEd works with other regional laboratories to design and develop a far-reaching program of development and applied research aimed at helping schools use valid and reliable assessment

tools not only to measure but to improve student performance. In providing national leadership on critical assessment and accountability issues, WestEd focuses on four key areas: whole school implementation; school-to-work transition; teacher assessment and certification; and technical services in the development and use of performance-based assessments.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*California Curriculum Policy in the 1990s* (in collaboration with Michael Kirst, PACE) is a paper that examines the evolution of California's statewide curriculum policy within the changing state context.

*Educating Limited-English Proficient Students: A Review of the Research on School Programs and Classroom Practices* is a monograph that describes research-based program options and

teaching approaches available to schools and districts to address the needs of students who are English language learners.

*Standards: Community Constructions of the Meaning of Quality*, is a guide and set of exercises to help schools and their communities move beyond the rhetoric of "high standards for all" to explore several core challenges in articulating standards that can drive organizational learning.



## NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH, & ADULTS

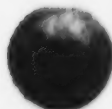
# Welcome to NWREL!

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's mission is to improve educational results for children, youth, and adults by providing research and development assistance in delivering equitable, high quality educational programs. NWREL provides research and development assistance to education, government, community agencies, business and labor. NWREL's primary service area is the Northwest states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.



### Organization

A Look at NWREL;  
Board and staff;  
Location



### Programs & Services

Training & Technical Assistance;  
Research & Development for Educational Improvement;  
Education & Community Services



### What's New

Latest additions to NWREL Web site;  
News and vacancy announcements, upcoming events



### Resources

NWREL products & publications, newsletters, magazines,  
events, and promising practices in the Northwest



### Search

Search NWREL's site

### Resource Links:

- [Northwest Educational Resources](#)
- [Regional Laboratory Network](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
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Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory  
Home Page  
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## Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL)

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**States Served:** Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington

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### Mission

To improve educational results for children, youth, and adults by providing research and development assistance in delivering equitable, high quality educational programs. NWREL provides research and development assistance to education, government, community agencies, business and labor.

### Key Initiatives

NWREL focuses on comprehensive school improvement strategies, building on its solid, long-term relationships with schools and communities in the Northwest region. Development efforts are concentrated at school-community partnership sites which serve high concentrations of economically-disadvantaged children in both urban and rural areas. NWREL conducts a broad array of information and assistance services to educators, policymakers, and the public to support widespread educational improvement efforts across the Northwest region. Key initiatives are:

*Assessment and Accountability.* NWREL is developing a comprehensive system to identify, define, manage, interpret, and report educational information as a cohesive set of school and community indicators, with related resources, training, and technical assistance to support implementation and maintenance. In the area of classroom assessment, NWREL is concentrating on training and research in communications skills—writing, reading, spelling, and listening.

*Early Childhood Education.* NWREL is developing processes and resources for schools to establish classroom environments that are developmentally and culturally appropriate for young children. NWREL also has developed a self-study process, resource materials, and training to assist teams from schools and agencies in local communities to plan and improve comprehensive services available to children and families.

*Rural Education.* NWREL is developing a process and related tools to enable members of rural communities to carry out school improvement efforts they plan and implement themselves.

*School Change Processes.* NWREL is developing strategies and tools to enable school/district/community systems to change their school culture so that all students achieve high standards consistent with what their communities value.

*Community-based Learning.* NWREL's work focuses on helping education and community partners improve learning activities they create for both students and teachers through such vehicles as school-to-work transition, service learning, cooperative education, work experience, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

*Science and Mathematics Education.* NWREL is developing and disseminating resources from "real-life" examples of effective science and mathematics materials and practices.

*Curriculum and Instruction.* NWREL is developing a curriculum inquiry and improvement model for school teams to examine current practice, clarify standards and local priorities, plan learning experiences, and conduct classroom research.

### **Signature Programs**

*Creating Writers.* Since six years ago, when NWREL began to study effective methods of teaching students to write well, nearly 100,000 teachers have participated in Creating Writers training to gain skills in using a six-trait analytic model for teaching writing and assessing student writing with accuracy and reliability.

*Onward to Excellence.* Onward to Excellence is a research-based school improvement process which focuses the attention and resources of school systems and their communities on learning success for all students, and develops the capacity within school systems for continuous improvement through shared leadership.

### **Specialty Area**

Focusing on *School Change Processes*, NWREL is bringing together practitioners, policymakers, assistance providers, researchers, program leaders, and others to learn more about and improve the processes for changing schools to enable all students to achieve high standards. Through its work in this specialty area, NWREL expects to increase the focus of school change efforts on learning success for all students; elevate the quality of development and applied research in the area of school change; develop practical, field-oriented tools and strategies; and encourage collaboration that brings all key stakeholders together locally, regionally, and nationally. NWREL is providing national leadership in convening experts from across the country to address issues in school change; establish school change networks of researchers, practitioners, and others; and synthesize knowledge about trends, policies, and progress in school change processes.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*Assessing and Teaching Writing* is a collection of resources for teachers using a six-trait analytic model for assessing and teaching writing which includes "Seeing with New Eyes" for primary teachers and "Picture Books," an annotated bibliography.

*Connections: Linking Work and Learning* is a set of tools to help plan and implement work-based learning, which includes "Career Exploration Guides," "Job Shadow Guides," "Learning Site Analysis Form," and "Integrated Workplace Learning Project."

*School Improvement Research Series* is a series of research-based resources for use by educators in planning and implementing local school improvement efforts, including topical research syntheses and "close-ups" on specific methods and techniques for school improvement.



## PACIFIC RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

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ABOUT PREL

PREL PROGRAMS

PUBLICATIONS

WHAT'S NEW

The Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is a non-profit corporation that serves the U.S. entities in the Pacific region. PREL helps Pacific schools improve educational outcomes for children, youth, and adults by providing research, development, training, technical assistance, group facilitation, information resource activities, dissemination and evaluation services.

If you have any questions about PREL, please send a message to [askprel@prel.hawaii.edu](mailto:askprel@prel.hawaii.edu)



If you have any questions regarding our Web Site, please send a message to



[webmaster@prel.hawaii.edu](mailto:webmaster@prel.hawaii.edu)



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## Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL)

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**Director:** Dr. John Kofel

**Region Served:** American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap), Guam, Hawaii, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau

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### Mission

To assist education, government, and labor groups as well as community agencies and businesses in maintaining cultural literacy and improving the quality of life by helping to strengthen educational programs and processes for children, youth, and adults.

### Key Initiatives

PREL's program of work has focused on the following four key initiatives:

*Leadership and Systemic Development.* PREL is conducting a research synthesis on At-Risk Teachers and research studies on the "Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators" and "Teaching and Learning Styles." In addition, PREL has provided training and technical assistance for school leadership development through leadership institutes, the Pacific Educators in Residence program, a School/Community-Based Management project in a remote rural island setting, and planning sessions for a leadership academy in the region.

*Standards-based Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.* PREL's activities in support of this initiative have focused on adapting standards for the Pacific region in selected content areas (e.g., CD-ROM on Pacific Standards for Math, Science, and Teaching); assisting in the development of Language Arts, Culture and Vocational content performance standards and benchmarks; conducting professional development for teachers and specialists on standards development and alignment of standards, curricula and practice; applying technology and local materials; and disseminating related products and information, such as classroom assessment tools and practices.

*Family and Community Involvement.* PREL continues to work with others to establish a culturally appropriate definition of parent/community involvement in schools and identify appropriate roles for parents and community members to engage in school activities and governance. An example of how this is working successfully is the Al Maron Project on Ebeye, Republic of the Marshall Islands. PREL has developed products—ranging from posters that are translated into major languages of the region on helping children with homework to "Read Aloud" tapes on local legends translated into English and local languages—and processes to encourage and enhance parent involvement in their children's learning. A research synthesis on "Family and Community Involvement" currently is being developed.

## Signature Programs

*Pacific Educator In Residence (PEIR) Program.* This program provides a structured professional development experience for qualified Pacific educators during a year's residency at any one of PREL's office sites. Participation is open to any teacher, school administrator, counselor, education specialist, or faculty member at an educational institution within PREL's constituency. PEIRs bring their own expertise and contribute much to PREL's program of work. As part of their plan, PEIRs identify how they will apply their new knowledge and experience to enhance their respective educational systems. Approximately 29 PEIRs have gone through the program over a period of 11 years.

*Leadership Teams.* One of PREL's strategies in the Pacific region is to plan with people, not for them. PREL strives to empower and ensure the effective use of regional resources in collaborative systemic reform efforts. This is achieved through leadership teams with representatives from each of the ten entities. These teams have proven to be extremely valuable for PREL's work in a region with great distances separating the entities. The leadership teams have been particularly effective in identifying the region's needs, thus helping PREL prioritize its activities and focus its resources. PREL currently supports several leadership teams: the Pacific Mathematics and Science Leadership Team, the Research and Development Cadre, the Pacific Curriculum and Instruction Council, and the Education Technology Leadership Team.

*Pacific Educators' Conference.* PREL annually convenes a Pacific Educators' Conference in cooperation with the region's educational community. The conference is the largest gathering of Pacific educators, with an average attendance of approximately 1200. The three-day venue involves delegations from each entity as well as participants from other parts of the U.S. mainland, Australia, New Zealand, and other Melanesian and Polynesian entities. In recent years Pacific Islanders have been presenters in about 90 percent of the more than 120 workshops covering a wide-range of educational, economic, and cultural offerings. Pre-conference institutes allow for more in-depth work on selected topics. The PREL conference is hosted by entities in the Pacific region on a rotational basis.

*Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE).* DBAE is more than a philosophy; it is also an integrated curriculum that promotes art as a way to understand teaching and learning in culturally diverse settings. Its objective is to develop students' abilities to understand and appreciate the art of others, as well as their own. This is achieved by offering students experiences in art production, aesthetics and art history and criticism. PREL recognizes that in multi-ethnic classrooms, the arts can serve as an integrating factor across several components of the curriculum, including indigenous languages, legends, storytelling, music and visual arts which are deeply rooted in Pacific cultures. PREL currently is developing a series of videotapes on the DBAE for dissemination throughout the Pacific region.

## Specialty Area

As one of three laboratories assigned the specialty area of *Language and Cultural Diversity*, PREL works closely with the Northeast and Islands Laboratory at Brown University (LAB) and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) to develop a comprehensive, complementary program of research and development in this area. PREL's contribution to this effort includes a research focus on home and school language use. While this area is of particular interest to regional educators, policymakers, and parents, PREL's work also will help advance the nation's knowledge and capacity to address appropriate language in education programming for linguistically and culturally diverse learners. PREL continues to assist constituents through the development of Language and Cultural standards; training and

teaching strategies that promote language acquisition; product development; and research synthesis and study on language use. An extended network of partners is being established to support this work and better leverage resources.

### **Selected Recent Products**

*At Risk Teachers* is a synthesis of current research on risk factors affecting teacher performance to inform educators.

*Pacific Schools Improvement Research* (CD-ROM) presents a series of research studies for the purpose of school improvement in the Pacific region, and deals with such topics as culture and learning at home and school, risk factors among high school students in the Pacific region, and remoteness and access to learning opportunities in the region.

*Reading Aloud to Children* is a series of four special audio guides (produced in English as well as Hawaiian, Marshallese, Pohnpeian, and Samoan) that encourages parents and children to read together both in their first language and in English, the language of the school.

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